DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 340 246 FL 019 969

AUTHOR Moys, Alan; Townsend, Richard
TITLE Making the Case for Languages. Pathfinder 8.
INSTITUTION Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, London (England).
REPORT NO ISBN-0-948003-79-0
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 34p.
AVAILABLE FROM Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, Regent's College, Inner Circle, London NW1 4NS, United Kingdom (3.95 British pounds).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Change; Classroom Techniques; Economic Factors; Educational Benefits; *Educational Needs; Educational Philosophy; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Inservice Teacher Education; *Language Attitudes; *Language Role; Language Teachers; Parent Attitudes; Persuasive Discourse; Program Development; Second Language Instruction; *Second Language Programs; Self Evaluation (Individuals); Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

Techniques and arguments are provided for teachers interested in promoting second language program development in British schools. An introductory section presents an exercise for gauging and initiating an awareness of language needs and attitudes in department staff. The first section of the guide then outlines salient arguments, including those focusing on economic and educational benefits of second language learning, especially in the context of the emerging European Community, the case for devoting substantial resources to improve language teaching, and the case for more inservice education for language teachers. A self-assessment form designed to help language teachers think about their department's training and professional development needs is provided. The second section of the guide offers suggestions for tailoring thinking and arguments to appropriate audiences, including other departments, parents, and students. Lists of additional resources, related research and development projects, and useful agency addresses are appended. (MSE)

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Pathfinder

Making the case for languages

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First published 1991
Copyright © 1991 Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research
ISBN 0 948003 79 0

Cover by Logos Design & Advertising
Printed in Great Britain by Direct Printers Ltd.

Published by Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, Regent's College, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NS.

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Introduction

As Britain enters the 90s we are witnessing a surge of public interest in languages on a scale few of us could have imagined even a decade ago. This is good news for teachers of languages, who for too long have had to argue the importance of their subject against a sea of apathy. It is good news above all because, of all the factors which motivate learners, public attitudes are among the most important. Young Scandinavians are successful at language learning not because they are better taught (even less because of any supposed extra natural aptitude for languages) but because they live in a society which recognises the absolute necessity of foreign language skills. While it would obviously be foolish to imagine that an anglophone country will ever feel the same pressure to learn languages as, say, Holland or Denmark, more and more people in this country are realising that without foreign language competence they - and their children - are likely to be disadvantaged as citizens in a shrinking world. **Monolingualism is curable...**

Now that languages are a foundation subject in the National Curriculum, and may well before long be a required component in courses 16-19 also, why do we still need to put the case for our subject? The answer is simple: making languages compulsory will not in itself guarantee that learners will be motivated, or that all teachers in the school (or even the modern languages department!) will be convinced. Nor will it bring any guarantee of adequate resourcing and classroom facilities, nor of opportunities for foreign visits and exchanges, nor of links with the world of employment.

Schools are enjoying an increasing level of success in this subject area, but the case for languages still needs to be made forcefully and with conviction. This book offers advice to heads of department and others who have to make their case, whether it be for curriculum time, for resources, for appropriate classroom conditions, or for support and understanding from colleagues, headteachers, governors, parents - and children.

STARTER EXERCISE: TRY THIS ON YOUR DEPARTMENT

When did your department last have occasion to talk about languages and language learning to:

- ★ parents?
- ★ employers?
- ★ other departments?
- ★ governors?
- ★ the head teacher and senior management?
- ★ careers staff?
- ★ the children?

What did you talk about?

How well do you think these different people understand what learning a language in your school is all about? Give them a rating on a scale 0-5 (0=not a clue, 5=fully tuned in). Compare the scores you have given with those of your departmental colleagues. If you all agree a score of 4 or 5 for each category, read no further! You have clearly recognised the vital importance of making your case. If on the other hand the scores are generally lower, you have the starting point for a valuable analysis of what needs to be done.

SIZING UP THE DOUBTERS

It's a waste of time trying to teach my Darren German. He can't read and write properly in English! (a parent)

Languages are difficult to get a good grade in - and you don't really need them. (careers interview)

I speak Urdu as well as English, but that won't get me a job. (third-year pupil)

We don't need linguists in the car rental business. (employer)

You can teach languages in any classroom. (Deputy Head, timetable)

They play games and draw pictures of the Eiffel Tower. (another department)

Familiar views? Or untypical? Either way, they help to inform our approach to making the case for languages.

Part 1 - The case

The economic argument

- There are 360 million people in the European Community; 300 million of them don't speak English as their mother tongue. In the EC:

> German is the mother tongue of 78 million people
> French is the mother tongue of 60 million people
> English comes third with 55 million people

- The UK has for several years been the principal target for company acquisitions and mergers among EC member states, and in the top three 'acquiring' interests in other EC states. Some typical samples:

> The food industry
> Telecommunications
> Financial and legal services
> Transport
> Retailing
> Manufacturing
> Building and construction
> Leisure and recreation

The message is clear; within a very few years a significant part of our working population will be employed by enterprises with partners or affiliates elsewhere in the EC. Whether you work in a local bank or building society, a double glazing firm, a high street fashion store or a solicitors' office, you are likely to find your career path increasingly shared by and open to your own employer's workforce from other European countries. Language skills will be important wherever you work.

Business no longer recognises national frontiers. Just look at the cross-border takeovers and mergers which are announced almost every day: $40 bn worth within the EC alone in 1989. What serious international company is going to select its future leaders from people who are not as much at ease in Paris, Frankfurt, Rome or, indeed, Tokyo as they are in London or Glasgow? And yet, how often do we see British commercial representatives at trade fairs abroad hard put to communicate with their potential customers because they speak no language other than English?

"There is the cautionary tale of the angry reply sent by a French businessman who, after repeated attempts to get through to his trading partner in Britain on the telephone, sent the following exasperated telex: 'Lorsque nous téléphonons, votre standardiste ne connait pas le français et raccroche le téléphone tout simplement sans chercher. Vous voudrez bien lui expliquer que l'anglais est certes une langue merveilleuse mais pas encore universelle. Si vous voulez continuer à travailler avec l'étranger il vous faudra faire un effort. C'est ce que font toutes les autres nations'."

From an address given by HRH the Prince of Wales, May 1989

Other sources of ammunition:

Languages in British business (Stephen Hagen).
Lost for words and *Winning words* (British Tourist Authority).
Labour market and skill trends 1991-92. Planning for a changing labour market (Department of Employment).

The educational argument

Successful language learning at school:

- develops practical competence
- enhances self-confidence
- provides a good base for further languages and career opportunities
- offers insights into other cultures - and into our own
- inculcates valuable study skills
- increases awareness of how language works
- fosters personal and social development
- helps break down intolerance and cultural prejudice...

THE Sun

Sun exclusive

SNOWDON HEART DRAMA

SEE PAGE FIVE

UP YOURS DELORS

At midday tomorrow Sun readers are urged to tell the French fool where to stuff his ECU

£292,000 LOTTO - Page 9 • £31,000 BINGO - Page 35

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The educational case for languages is, of course, well rehearsed and familiar to language teachers. How well understood is it in other departments? The final report of the National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group provides useful and usable material. Here is a sample (para 3.5):

> 3.5 The use of a foreign language to communicate with other people, whether fellow-learners or native speakers, fosters the spirit of co-operation and provides practical proof of the value of learning a foreign language. This lays the basis for understanding the potential of linguistic competence in adult work and leisure. It broadens horizons beyond the narrowly local and national: it helps learners to appreciate that they are citizens not only of the United Kingdom but also of Europe and of the rest of the world. It encourages them to enter into and respect the attitudes and customs not only of other countries but also of the different communities making up their own society. With developing linguistic competence comes an enhanced appreciation and heightened awareness of another culture, which enables pupils to gain access to and participate in that culture.

One last thought - the case for languages in schools depends on **learner success**. Without it we are as likely to provoke negative attitudes, lack of confidence, and intolerance.

LANGUAGES BEYOND 16

No languages department can ignore the need to press the case for languages in courses beyond 16. **Fewer than 10% of young people in any year** continued a language beyond GCSE in the 80s. This is a scandalous waste of our talent and our resources.

Happily this situation is likely to be transformed in the 1990s by a number of developments:

- ★ the practical appeal of GCSE courses, which has already led to an increase in continuation rates;
- ★ the '1992 effect' on young people's career perceptions;
- ★ moves to reform and broaden 16-19 education, with a renewed emphasis on vocationally related courses;
- ★ the downward pressure now increasingly being exerted by higher education, which we shall refer to as the ERASMUS effect;
- ★ the development of more vocational courses;
- ★ increase in student mobility.

THE ERASMUS EFFECT

One of the most outstandingly successful initiatives by the European Community is the ERASMUS Programme, which provides financial support for an EC-wide network of exchange arrangements between universities and colleges. Students spend a period (at least three months) in another country, pursuing their degree course in a partner institution. ERASMUS is for students of all disciplines, though in its opening years it quite properly gave priority to students whose degree study was NOT languages. Every higher education establishment in the UK has at least one ERASMUS partnership, and in some cases four or five. The effect on student attitudes to languages has been dramatic. Demand for supplementary courses in foreign languages in universities and polytechnics has in many cases outstripped capacity, as students realise that in the short term they won't be able to cope linguistically with living and studying in Hamburg or Barcelona, while in the longer term their best career moves may well take them into other countries.

- ★ How much information about ERASMUS and other European schemes does your school have?
- ★ Who holds this information?
- ★ Are your departmental colleagues aware of its implications?
- ★ Who tells parents about developments like ERASMUS?

The National Curriculum Council has proposed that foreign language competence should be a core skill for all students on courses beyond 16. Meanwhile, schools need as far as possible to plan for a steady increase in demand over the next ten years.

DIVERSIFICATION

Section 3 of the Education Reform Act allows for nineteen different languages to be offered as a foundation subject in the National Curriculum...

Only a minority of UK trade is now with the English-speaking world...

The Government favours a progressive diversification of the range of languages on offer as first foreign language in our schools...

...and yet more than 90% of our young people start French as their first foreign language in school.

It is, of course, very easy to explain this apparent contradiction, particularly when it will require substantial investment in teacher training and retraining to ensure an adequate supply of specialists in languages other than French. However, there are encouraging indications that individual schools or groups of schools in LEAs are introducing alternative first languages in increasing numbers.

If your department wishes to make a case for diversification in your school, the argument is certain to centre around organisational and resourcing issues, rather than the desirability of any particular language.

You must:

- show how your existing staff resources could contribute to such a development.
- quantify in precise planning terms the timetable and other requirements of the proposed provision over a three to five year period.
- show how you propose to offer a second foreign language.
- If you are interested in making the case for more languages in your school, make sure you have read:

Diversification of foreign languages in schools (Peter Dickson and Barbara Lee) - an evaluation of the experience of the ten LEAs participating in a DES funded programme from 1988-90.
Survey of the diversification of the first modern foreign language in a sample of secondary schools (HMI).
Towards diversification (Michael Calvert).
Which language? Diversification and the National Curriculum (David Phillips).
Occasional papers 1-5 (OXPROD).

Let us suppose, for example, that yours is an eight-form entry school, and that you are proposing that half the entry do French and half do Italian. What do you offer as second foreign language in, say, Year 2?

OPTION A: A crossover arrangement so that those doing French can pick up Italian and vice versa?

OPTION B: A completely new language (say Spanish) not already available as first foreign language?

The implications of these alternatives are important. Option B is simpler in timetabling terms, but option A is workable if no other language is available. (However, option A is less likely to be suitable in smaller schools since it may be difficult to recruit viable classes from the smaller pool of potential learners.)

The operational case

Learning a language in school presents a special range of challenges, especially if the objective is practical competence.

★ The medium is the message. Learners' exposure to the target language is generally limited to the lesson time available.

★ Opportunities for practice and support outside the classroom and at home are likely to be restricted.

★ It is difficult to create a realistic learning environment.

★ Languages have not traditionally been resourced as a practical subject.

★ There is still a strong residue of public resistance to the importance of competence in languages, including a persistent thread of opinion that languages are a girls' subject.

If language departments are to succeed in meeting these challenges, the environment for teaching and learning needs to be right. All too often the **operational conditions** are inadequate. There is a clear case to be made for:

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Properly qualified and experienced teachers.
- Foreign language assistants and/or other native-speaker helpers.

TIME

- 10% FL1 may be all we can expect in a crowded National Curriculum timetable, but the special concentration required for learning a language is an argument for sensitive layout of the available time in the working week.
- The second foreign language has been the subject of conflicting policy recommendations over recent years. Although the decisive issue is likely to be increasingly one of time, the educational message is now clear:

'...we recommend a flexible approach which would encourage schools to consider the introduction of second foreign languages as early as possible...to those who, in learning the first, have given evidence of enthusiasm and commitment.' Paragraph 16.3

'...we believe that, in principle, pupils' entitlement to a ten per cent share of time for the study of the first...modern foreign language should be preserved throughout key stage 3...and 4. Where a second foreign language is provided, we suggest that at least a further five per cent of time, drawn from non-foundation time...should be allocated for the two languages together.' Paragraph 16.10

The National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group Report, October 1990

ACCOMMODATION

- The case for full-scale 'dedicated' accommodation for learning languages is now overwhelming. Delivery of the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum will necessitate permanent teaching bases, equipped with:

  - ★ appropriate acoustic treatment
  - ★ furniture which can be arranged flexibly
  - ★ OHP and screen
  - ★ facilities for class and individual listening
  - ★ ready access to video
  - ★ ready access to computer facilities
  - ★ adequate workshop, preparation and storage space for materials production by teachers

CLASS SIZE

- Languages have traditionally been a 'cheap' element in terms of curriculum costing. In view of the primacy given to practical language skills in the National Curriculum, there are strong arguments for a reduction in the size of teaching groups.

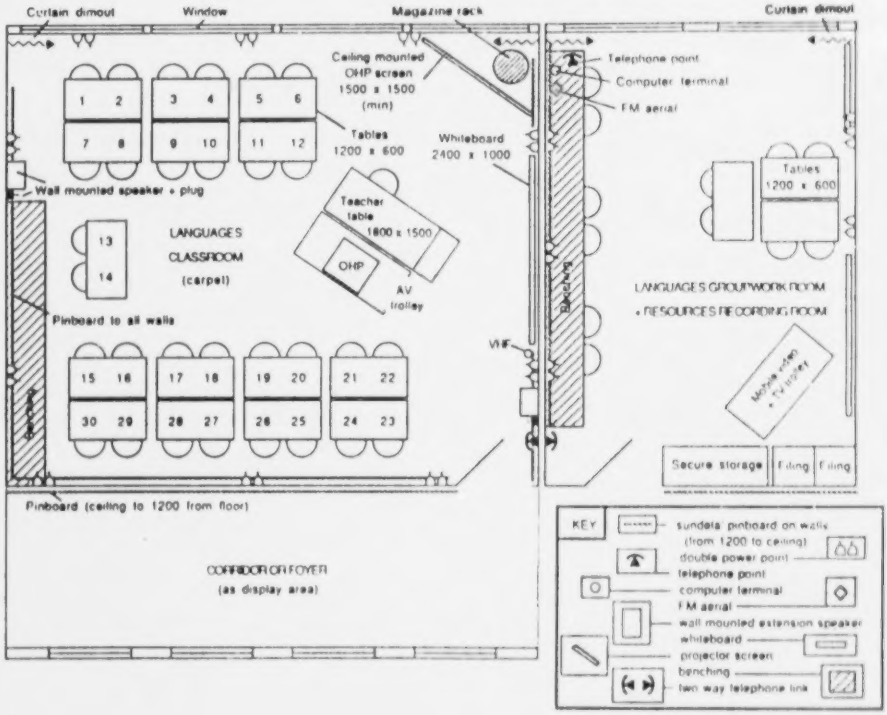
LINKS AND EXCHANGES

- There are encouraging signs that more and more schools see links with partners in other countries as a 'whole-school' commitment, not as the exclusive domain (and responsibility) of the languages department.

- Partner schools in the countries whose language you teach can provide the 'audience' your learners need in order to give point to communicating in a new language.

FURTHER AMMUNITION ON RESOURCES

National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group Report, October 1990, Chapter 17.
Equipping the modern languages department for the 1990s, NALA, 1989.



The plans shown are one possible example for the layout of a classroom and adjoining combined small group-work/recording resources room, as part of a larger modern languages suite.

An illustration from *Equipping the modern languages department for the 1990s*

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The case for professional development

There is an old jibe which says that only the English can teach a language without actually using it in class. Whatever our past weaknesses may have been in this respect, teaching a language in today's schools requires:

- a high level of practical fluency;
- a close knowledge of the country concerned;
- a proper understanding of language and language learning;
- familiarity with both theoretical and practical classroom issues in methodology.

Teachers of languages need

- linguistic and cultural updating
- pedagogical refreshment

at regular intervals if they are to deliver adequately the demands of a rapidly changing curriculum. The case for a proper share of INSET training funds has to be made persuasively, particularly as they are delegated to individual schools, and the benefits have to be demonstrable.

LINGUISTIC AND PROFESSIONAL AUDIT

Whether or not you use current education-speak to describe the process, you need to prepare carefully thought-out plans for the development of languages in your school in the context of its own development plans, so that you can make the case to senior management and the governors. Since the quality and the expertise of the teaching staff will be a crucial factor in this process, it's an important first step to engage the whole department in assessing current strengths, future needs and ways in which you will monitor progress. This process can be perceived as painful and threatening, but with careful handling it enables a department to think and plan positively.

One way of undertaking this exercise is to use a self-assessment grid or questionnaire, the results of which can remain private to the individual colleague. (Incidentally, the very fact of this assurance is often enough to convince colleagues that this sort of analysis should be shared and open.) The important objective is that all colleagues engage honestly in the process. If they prefer not to reveal the content of their questionnaire responses, the process of reflection will mean that they can still contribute more effectively to departmental discussion about training priorities.

Here are some ideas for a self-assessment form:

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN OUR DEPARTMENT

Our teachers are our most important resource. We need to plan new teaching programmes and approaches for our classes.

As a first step, it would be useful if all members of the department could give some thought to the self-assessment check which follows. The answers you write to each question remain confidential to you - you are under no pressure to reveal your assessment. By addressing these issues you will nonetheless be better placed to contribute to discussion in the department of our plans for the future and the case we make for professional development and support.

LINGUISTIC SKILLS

For each of the languages you teach:

(1) What opportunities do you have in your daily life to speak your language(s) outside the classroom?

(2) What visits have you made to the target country in the last three years?

(3) How would you rate your competence in each language?

- ★ competence well beyond needs of 11-18 classes
- ★ competence generally adequate for 11-18 classes
- ★ competence generally adequate for 11-16 classes
- ★ not up to the new demands of GCSE/National Curriculum

FL1	FL2

(4) Would you describe your FL competence as:

- ★ improving?
- ★ declining?
- ★ remaining steady?

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

(5) Make a list of the occasions in the last three years when you have engaged in in-service development and/or training in your discipline:

- ★ in your school?
- ★ at local or LEA courses?
- ★ at other courses or conferences?
- ★ in project-focused work (e.g. graded objectives)?

(6) Are there any areas in which you can offer experience or expertise to other colleagues (e.g. information technology, TVEI, profiling, testing, autonomous learning, careers guidance)?

(7) Can you identify any present or likely demands on your professional expertise where you would like help to increase your capability?

Part II - The audience

Knowing your audience is a central requirement whatever your purpose, and the arguments so far explored in this book are not all equally suited to any audience. Your departmental colleagues will between them have invaluable understanding of the groups we are targetting - other departments and colleagues, headteacher and senior management, governors, parents, business and employers, and the pupils themselves.

As in Part I, we assume that you will wish to develop your thinking - both strategic and tactical - as a departmental group. The ideas presented here may prompt you to make much more detailed plans than could be illustrated here.

Making the curricular case with other departments

Languages have often been considered as a 'sore thumb' subject when issues of cross-curricular collaboration arise. However, this widely held view has been progressively eroded in recent years as language learning has emerged as a practical subject with obvious connections to other curriculum areas and to the world of work. There is now a much greater awareness of the potential for linking with other subjects - it is ironical that the advent of a National Curriculum based on a very traditional-looking list of subjects has in the event given rise to a surge of activity which may lead to a greater integration of the curriculum than in the past. The final report of the National Curriculum Working Group is emphatic in its view that there is great scope for progress in this area:

Cross-curricular themes and skills

3.8 Because the study of a modern foreign language involves re-learning how to express oneself, it is well suited to dealing with topics from subjects as varied as history, geography, technology, mathematics and the sciences. Even basic work with numbers, prices and measures reinforces mathematical understanding; this can later be developed into work on scientific aspects of the modern world. In addition, the study of a modern foreign language can contribute to the following cross-curricular dimensions and themes which have been identified by the National Curriculum Council:

- personal and social education
- multicultural perspectives
- the European dimension in education
- citizenship
- careers education and guidance
- economic and industrial understanding
- environmental education
- health education

The National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group Report, October 1990

The Working Group goes on to devote the whole of Chapter 8 of its report to exploring cross-curricular opportunities. This chapter provides a good agenda for discussion within languages departments, and a chance to identify the first steps - or the next steps, since most departments will have at least some experience of initiatives in this area. The key messages you should bring out of such discussion are:

- that departments will need to help each other to a 'whole curriculum view';
- that small steps are more likely to succeed than grand designs when it comes to collaboration across departments.

REMEMBER

- Making the case for languages is not about fighting your corner from a position of isolation, but about showing your colleagues in other departments that you want to take a broad curriculum view, and that you have something to offer.
- Jigsaws take a long time to assemble, so be patient.

AS A FIRST STEP

- Produce a single-sheet summary of the cross-curricular opportunities which figure in the Working Group report, and circulate it to other departments with an offer to explore possible projects. It would be useful to do a similar exercise for the 'areas of experience' laid down in the Programmes of Study (Chapter 6).
- Invite other departments to a presentation of your department's work, since many of your colleagues will otherwise continue to base their view of languages in school on their own distant recollections (not always positive!) of their experience as learners.
- Make a particular point of developing closer understanding with the English department, perhaps by an exchange of information and views about the 'connections' between the National Curriculum advice in the two subject areas. Other central topics could include making the most of the other languages children bring into the classroom; language awareness; the role of grammar teaching, etc.
- Offer to support through your department the work of other curriculum areas - see examples below.

EXAMPLES

To link with:

★ **health education**
Explore 'healthy eating' by comparing habits in two countries.

★ **geography/environmental studies**
Prepare simple guides to your locality (wildlife, industrial history, places to visit, leisure and sport, etc) in the foreign language, for your partner school or for other visitors.

★ **technology**
Design and build a kite and write instructions for assembly and use in another language, for your partner school or for younger pupils in your own school.

CHECK OUT CAREERS GUIDANCE

How much do you and your colleagues know about languages and their place in the world of education, training and employment beyond school? If you are not already in close working contact, there is much to be gained on both sides by establishing a reliable line of communication. There is nowadays much more published guidance material available to students and their teachers, including a range of titles from CILT (see 'Some key titles and sources' section at the end of this book).

Perhaps your department already:

★ writes guidance material for your careers staff to use.
★ advises careers staff on published resource material.

Like many of the tasks which arise in this book, this one could be undertaken on a regular basis by a volunteer or nominated colleague in your team.

DO YOU HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS?

Even if you don't, there are children in your classes who do. Their particular learning difficulties may well be better understood by special needs teachers in your school. Now that it is a National Curriculum requirement that all children, unless individually exempted under current legislation, must follow the full range of core and foundation subjects, there is both opportunity and need for languages and special needs staff to exchange expertise.

Why not start by inviting special needs teacher colleagues to observe and offer comments on the learning patterns in your classes?

MANAGING IN THE CHANGING CONTEXT

For everyone the context is changing, not least for language teachers.

If **managing** is **making things happen**, by

- planning
- organising
- monitoring
- evaluating

good management is trying to **make the right things happen**.

You already have the necessary basic skills. You may not have been able yet to make the necessary time to take the long view.

Of course you need vision to foresee the further development of language learning in your school. But begin realistically where you are.

★ Are you clear about **the management processes** in your school, including those resulting from local management?

★ What are the procedu , for consultation?

★ What is the school's planning cycle?

★ When are the key decisions made, and by whom?

★ Are you participating fully and effectively (in meetings, via minutes, governors' sub-groups - on curriculum, resources, staffing issues, etc)?

★ Are you clear about **school policies**? How many are there? What are they? Which are the most important to the development of your department?

★ Are your **departmental policies** clear and known? Do they relate to school policies? Are there any changes in school policy you need to ask for? (For example, related to the introduction of languages in the National Curriculum, assessment or resource issues.) Would it be helpful to present an occasional report, for example on curriculum development and extra-curricular activities (in addition to the departmental handbook), to the Head, senior management or governors?

★ Is there an institutional **development plan**? In recent years schools have been encouraged to work to longer-term plans, increasingly with financial implications. Building and keeping to plans is not as straightforward in the

rapidly changing educational context as some would like to suggest. However, your department will not want to be excluded.

★ Managing involves **people and other resources**. People are the most expensive resource. Are you clear which resources you will need, what is available and how resources are allocated? In the interests of effectiveness, efficiency and economy, the introduction of LMS has made everyone more aware of the size and distribution of the cake - and of relative costs, for example, the costs of:

teaching and non-teaching time	equipment and furniture
group sizes	materials
language assistants and other support	in-service training time
clerical and technical support	new course development

and all the other demands on a school's budget.

Increasingly, at national and local level funding is according to a 'formula'. But where choices are to be made, budget decisions will be made on the best plans and practices offered.

Formula funding is rarely as neutral as it may appear. Age-weightings, lump sums or varying 'scales' of funding - and, of course, the overall size of the cake - have a great effect on actual allocations.

★ How does your system work? What is your current balance? (Has there been a complete audit of the department, including staffing?)

★ Is there a formula in the school? How much do you receive per pupil? Are there subject or age-weightings? If so, how are they calculated? Are they responsive to change?

Some teachers do not see income and expenditure as their responsibility. However, the quality of decisions made will be influenced by the level of professional analysis and understanding.

IS YOUR HEADTEACHER'S DOOR OPEN?

The head and senior management staff in your school have a direct and urgent interest in the success of your department, as of all others in the school. How well do they understand the work you do and the challenges your departmental team are facing?

IS YOUR DOOR OPEN?

The most significant case you can make for languages is to open the door of your classes to visitors from other departments, preferably in some sort of participative role (e.g. brushing up their language skills for the next holiday or exchange visit).

Do you:

- invite senior staff into classes? (an excellent way of underlining the need for 'dedicated' teaching accommodation for your subject)
- prepare one-page summaries of key policy documents so as to update senior staff? Photocopy press articles?
- report successes as well as problems to the Head?
- arrange opportunities for the Head or senior staff to spearhead school links and exchanges by encouraging them to visit partner schools with you?

Making the case with parents

Parents generally start with very favourable attitudes to their children learning a foreign language. The trouble starts if and when the child begins to fail: at this point parents may question the value - or the effectiveness - of the operation. They probably also find it very difficult to assess for themselves whether their child is actually achieving, and indeed what they should reasonably expect.

You can do a lot to inform parents, not only about individual pupil progress, but also about what happens in the foreign language course. How informative is your department's contribution to the school's handbook for parents and their children? How much does it say about the emphasis and content of courses, and about approaches and expectations? Does it dispel the image that parents may have from their schooldays? Does it underline the greatly increased importance of language competence in a majority of careers?

AT YOUR NEXT PARENTS' EVENING

Why not try this idea, which is also good for pupil motivation.

1. With a roll of 35mm transparency colour film, take a picture (or better still, get the class to do this) of every member of the class.

2. Arrange for every member of the class to make a 30-second recording about themselves (with their own choice of script) onto a single cassette.

3. At the next parents' evening, arrange for the cassette to be hooked up to an automatic 'carousel' slide projector, so that parents see a continuous presentation of the members of the class - including the apple of their eye - showing off their language skills.

And what about the children?

Happily the days are past when we sought to make our case with our pupils by suggesting that 'the girls would become air hostesses and the boys conference interpreters or diplomats'. Such stereotypical approaches now seem archaic in the light of changing attitudes to issues of gender and equal opportunities on the one hand, and the potential demands of the new Europe on the other. We are now able to give far more convincing and immediate arguments to our young people, who indeed themselves see all around them evidence of the ways in which languages are increasingly important in people's lives.

Ultimately, however, the biggest factor in the increasing willingness of our young people to learn - and to carry on with - their languages has been the investment by teachers over the last fifteen years or so in renovating the objectives, the content and the learning styles of our foreign language courses. Making the case with children is all about replacing the 'Noddy French' of the past by active, practical approaches which engage the curiosity and interest of learners and which promote success. There is increasing evidence that teaching languages as a practical skill is also effective in maintaining the motivation of boys, who in the past have abandoned languages much more readily than the girls.

Meanwhile, the case for languages has never been easier to make - so perhaps this PATHFINDER can enjoy a very short life!

Some key titles and sources

British Tourist Authority
Lost for words
(BTA 1990)

British Tourist Authority
Winning words
(BTA in association with Thomas Cook, 1991)

Calvert, Michael
Towards diversification
(University of York LMDU, 1989)
Handbook and VHS video.

CILT Information Sheets (a series of free leaflets):
3: ***Careers using languages***
5: ***Facts and figures: sources of language statistics***
6: ***Language study beyond school and graduate studies: published guides***
11: ***The NC and modern foreign languages: basic list of documents***

Department of Education and Science
Your future in modern language teaching
Leaflet produced for the DES TASC Unit (1989).

Department of Education for Northern Ireland
Education reform in Northern Ireland: the way forward
(DENI, 1988)
Available from: DENI, Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Northern Ireland (Free).

Department of Employment
Labour market and skill trends 1991-92. Planning for a changing labour market
(Employment Department Group, 1990)

Dickson, Peter and Barbara Lee
Diversification of foreign languages in schools: the ESG Pilot Programme
(NFER, 1990)
Report of the findings of the evaluation programme (1988-90) commissioned by the DES.

Goethe-Institut
Discovering German
Promotional booklet and awards scheme conceived following a survey carried out by National Opinion Polls in 1989.
Available from: Goethe-Institut, 50 Princes Gate, Exhibition Road, London SW7 2PH, Tel: 071-225 3449.

Goethe-Institut
Warum deutsch lernen?
Promotional materials for 11-15 year olds, including video, leaflet, badges etc.
Available from: Goethe-Institut, 50 Princes Gate, Exhibition Road, London SW7 2PH, Tel: 071-225 3449 and from Goethe-Institut, 14 John Dalton Street, Manchester M2 6JR.

Hagen, Stephen
Languages in British business
(Newcastle Polytechnic in association with CILT, 1988)

HMI Report
Survey of the diversification of the first modern foreign language in a sample of secondary schools
(1991)

King, Ann
Degrees of fluency: the sixth-former's guide to language degree courses
(CILT, 1990)

King, Ann and Gareth Thomas with Derek Hewett
Languages and careers: an information pack
(CILT, 1989)
A4 folder containing book, posters, articles, and HE course-sheets.

National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group
Final Report (1990)
Copies are available from the National Curriculum Council.

Phillips, David
Which language? Diversification and the National Curriculum
(Hodder and Stoughton, 1989)

Powell, Bob
Boys, girls and languages in schools
(CILT, 1986)

Scottish Education Department
Effective learning and teaching in Scottish secondary schools: modern languages
(HMSO, 1990)
A report by HM Inspectors of Schools with separate Guide.

Scottish Information Office
Secretary of State outlines policy for teaching of languages
(News release, 26 July/1199/88)
Available from the Scottish Information Office, New St, Andrew's House, Edinburgh EH1 3TD.

Scottish Education Department
The teaching of languages other than English in Scottish schools.
SED Circular No 1178, 1989, and Circular No 2/1990 containing amendments.

Spanish Embassy
Take Spanish.
Fact file for KS3, including leaflets and video.
Available from: Spanish Embassy, Embajeria de Educacion, 20 Peel Street, London W8 7PD, Tel: 071-727 2462.

Research and development projects

CILT/NCC project on Languages and Special Educational Needs
(Jan 1991-May 1992)
Coordinator : Dr L King, CILT
Publications : Conference report and two project bulletins

Oxford Project on Diversification of first foreign language teaching (OXPROD)
A six-year research project designed to monitor the progress, with particular reference to attitude and attainment, of pupils learning languages other than French
Coordinators : Dr D Phillips and C Filmer-Sanky, Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford
Publications : OXPROD Newletter
Occasional Papers 1-5
Attitudes towards diversification: results of a survey of teacher opinion (1988)
Spanish as first foreign language in schools: past and present perspectives (1989)
A study of first-year pupils' attitudes towards French, German and Spanish (1989)
Diversification and 'Transfers-in' (1989)
A study of second-year pupils' attitudes towards French, German and Spanish (1991)

Addresses

Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH
Tel: 071-934 9000 (switchboard)

Department of Education and Science (DES/PDS)
Publications Despatch Centre
Canons Park, Honeypot Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 4PT
Tel: 081-952 2366

HMSO Publications Centre
51 Nine Elms Lane, London SW8 5DR
Tel: 071-211 5656

NCC Information Section
Albion Wharf, 25 Skeldergate, York Y01 2XL
Tel: 0904 622533

NFER
The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berks SL1 2DQ

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Pathfinder

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This book offers advice
to heads of department and others
who have to make their case,
whether it be for curriculum time,
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